DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 358 603 EC 302 165

TITLE South Dakota Speech-Language Pathology Programs, Statewide Program Review.
INSTITUTION South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre.
PUB DATE Jan 91
NOTE 14p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Certification; Entry Workers; Graduate Study; Higher Education; Labor Supply; *Language Handicaps; Masters Degrees; Needs Assessment; Personnel Needs; Professional Education; *Speech Handicaps; *Speech Pathology; *Speech Therapy; *State Programs; State Standards; Undergraduate Study
IDENTIFIERS *South Dakota

ABSTRACT

This report reviews undergraduate and graduate education programs in speech-language pathology in South Dakota and the potential impact of a 1991 South Dakota bill requiring a master's degree for employment as a speech-language pathologist. This bill would bring South Dakota certification into alignment with current national licensure standards. Programs reviewed include those at South Dakota State University, Northern State University, and the University of South Dakota. The report concludes that there is little evidence to support the concern that a move to a master's degree entry level would exacerbate personnel shortages in the state. The report also concludes that there are sufficient undergraduate and graduate speech-language pathology programs in South Dakota to meet employment needs. However, additional intercampus communication among programs is encouraged to ensure better planning and program coordination and viability. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED358603

South Dakota

Speech-Language Pathology Programs

STATEWIDE PROGRAM REVIEW

South Dakota Board of Regents
Office of the Executive Director
207 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-3159
Telephone (605) 773-3455

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

FL 021 053

South Dakota Board of Regents
Statewide Review of
Speech-Language Pathology Programs

Site Reviews: Conducted January 24-25, 1991

Review Team: James Naas, Ph.D.
Brescia College
Phone: 502-686-4233

John Bernthal, Ph.D.
University of Nebraska - Lincoln
Phone: 402-472-5496
FAX: 402-472-7697

Table of Contents

I. Overview 1
II. Persons Interviewed 2
III. Program Evaluation 3-4
IV. Impact of 1991 HB-1215 5
V. Recommendations to the Board 6
VI. Statement Concerning Proposal to Require a Master's Degree as the Entry Level for Speech-Language Pathology in South Dakota Schools 7-9
VII. Board of Regents Recommendations .. 10

I. Overview

The purpose of this report is to provide a review of undergraduate and graduate education programs in speech-language pathology at the state universities of South Dakota. Programs reviewed were: the undergraduate program at South Dakota State University, the undergraduate program at Northern State University, and the undergraduate and graduate programs at the University of South Dakota. The reviews were conducted by John E. Bernthal, Ph.D., University of Nebraska - Lincoln, and James F. Naas, Ph.D., Brescia College, Owensboro, Kentucky, at the request of the Board of Regents of the State of South Dakota.

The potential impact of 1991 South Dakota House Bill 1215 (HB-1215), and its amendments, was also to be addressed as part of this review. The bill and its amendments would:

1. Require a master's degree for entry level employment as a speech-language pathologist in all settings, including the public schools. Emergency exemptions would be granted.
2. Provide for the "grandfathering" of current public school practitioners who hold at least a bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology.
3. Place South Dakota's standards for the practice of speech-language at the same level as a majority of the states and all adjoining states in the region except one.
4. Bring South Dakota into compliance with the qualified provider provisions of P.L. 99-457, which requires that the entry level for the delivery of services in a state be at the highest level required for practice. Presently, South Dakota has a bachelor's level requirement for the practice of speech-language pathology in the schools and a master's requirement for all other speech-language pathologists.
5. Make standards for practice of speech-language pathology consistent with those for practice in the "sister" profession of audiology.
6. Have little impact on the number of available personnel in speech-language pathology.

As noted above, HB-1215 would bring South Dakota certification into alignment with the current national licensure standards for the practice of speech-language pathology. There are 39 states which have licensure laws which require the master's degree for employment as a speech-language pathologist. The enactment of this law would likely impact on the speech-language pathology education programs in the state in at least two ways. First, students would no longer be certified to practice speech-language pathology in the schools upon completion of the baccalaureate degree. This change would likely affect the undergraduate curriculum of at least one of the institutions where a majority of students are certified at the completion of the bachelor's degree. Second, there would likely be a modest increase in master's degree enrollment in the graduate speech-language pathology program. There is little, if any, evidence to support the concern that a move to a master's degree entry level would exacerbate personnel shortages in the state. Based on the statistical data reported by faculty at the three institutions, it is estimated that only 5-7 students per year take positions at the end of their undergraduate program. One program reported that only a couple of students per year obtain a public school endorsement at the bachelor level; one program reported that none of their students qualify; the third program (the smallest) reported that a majority of their students obtain the school endorsement and take employment in the schools.

Following a review of the three state-supported programs in light of national standards, professional trends, and even with passage of HB-1215, it is concluded that there are sufficient undergraduate and graduate speech-language pathology programs in South Dakota to meet employment needs. It is recommended that additional inter-campus communication among the state-supported programs be encouraged to ensure better planning, and program coordination and viability.

II. Persons Interviewed

The following persons were interviewed by the site visitors:

1. All full-time speech-language pathology and audiology program faculty members at each of the three institutions.

2. All appropriate deans and department chairs who have line responsibility for the programs at each of the three institutions.

3. Appropriate upper-level university administrators at the three institutions, including:
   - President Wagner (SDSU)
   - Vice President Carol Peterson (SDSU)
   - Vice President for Academic Affairs Flickema (NSU)
   - Associate VP for Research & Planning Gingrich (NSU)
   - Vice President for Academic Affairs Hazlett (USD)
   - Associate VP and Graduate School Dean Kaufman (USD)

4. A speech-language pathology undergraduate at SDSU.

5. Groups of both undergraduate and graduate students at USD.

III. Program Evaluation

The term "preprofessional" in this report will refer to *any* undergraduate program. The term "preprofessional only" will refer to an undergraduate education program which operates in the absence of an associated graduate program.

There are four speech-language pathology education programs in the state of South Dakota. Augustana College, in Sioux Falls, operates an undergraduate/preprofessional only program in a private, liberal arts institution and was not a part of this review. The programs will be discussed in the chronological order by which the site visits were conducted.

1. South Dakota State University operates an undergraduate/preprofessional only program in speech-language pathology.

2. Northern State University operates an undergraduate/pre-professional only program in speech-language pathology.

3. The University of South Dakota operates an undergraduate pre-professional program in speech-language pathology and a master's level graduate program in speech-language pathology. The latter program is accredited by the Educational Standards Board of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). This specialty accreditation is recognized by the Council on Post-secondary Accreditation (COPA). ASHA is the learned society and professional association for speech-language pathologists and audiologists. The program also offers a master's degree in audiology, but the degree program is not accredited by the Educational Standards Board.

Program Focus, Staff, Student Enrollment

1. South Dakota State University (SDSU)

There are approximately 55 speech-language pathology majors in the preprofessional only program at SDSU. The program is staffed with one full-time faculty member and two part-time faculty members. No faculty member holds the terminal degree.

The program faculty member reported that approximately 80% of the program graduates continue their education at the master's level immediately following graduation. The remaining 20% are thought to be employed by public schools.

Academic: The program focuses on basic science, normal aspects of speech, language, and hearing, and the disorders of articulation and language.

Clinic: Students have the option to complete 275 hours of supervised clinical practicum to fulfill certification requirements for public school employment.

2. Northern State University (NSU)

There are approximately 35 speech-language pathology majors in the preprofessional only program at NSU. There are two full-time faculty members. No faculty member holds the terminal degree.

The faculty members reported that approximately 20% of their graduates immediately continue their education at the master's level following graduation. Eighty percent were reported to accept public school employment at the completion of their bachelor's degree.

Academic: The program focuses on professional education at the undergraduate level. There are few opportunities for liberal arts and sciences course electives because of the relatively large number of required courses in the area of speech-language pathology disorders.

Clinic: Most students complete the 275 hours of supervised clinical practicum to fulfill certification requirements for public school employment.

3. University of South Dakota (USD)

There are approximately 60 speech-language pathology majors in the preprofessional program at USD. There are also 28 full-time equivalent speech-language pathology master's degree students. There are seven full-time faculty members. Six of the full-time faculty hold the terminal degree. There is also one part-time adjunct faculty member with the terminal degree.

Faculty members reported that almost all of the bachelor level graduates continue their education at the master's degree level prior to employment.

Academic: The preprofessional program reflects a strong focus on the liberal arts and sciences with coursework on the normal aspects of speech, language, and hearing, and the disorders of articulation and language. The graduate program is accredited by the Educational Standards Board of ASHA.

Clinic: The graduate program is accredited by the Educational Standards Board of ASHA. There is limited clinical practicum experience available to the student at the preprofessional (undergraduate) level. Graduate, professional education in speech-language pathology provides the practicum experiences required for the nationally recognized ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC), South Dakota State Licensure, and school certification in the State of South Dakota.

IV. Impact of 1991 House Bill 1215

1. South Dakota State University (SDSU)

Comparatively few preprofessional program students pursue school certification and/or public school employment following graduation. This suggests that the impact of HB 1215 would be minimal on program graduates, as most graduates earn a master's degree prior to employment. The SDSU curriculum is similar to many other preprofessional programs except for the option of the large amount of clinical practicum which qualifies them for school certification at the undergraduate level. The curriculum reflects a strong liberal arts and science program with normal aspects of speech, language, and hearing and the disorders of articulation and language.

2. Northern State University (NSU)

If HB 1215 is passed, it will restrict baccalaureate degree holders from practicing as speech-language pathologists in the public schools and would affect program graduates, many of whom currently are employed in the schools at the completion of their preprofessional programs. It would also make the completion of the 275 hours of supervised clinical practicum at the undergraduate level superfluous since only 100 hours of practicum count toward national certification (licensure).

The NSU undergraduate curriculum is unlike most preprofessional programs nationwide. It contains a large number of professional courses and a large clinical component. Several of the preprofessional disorders courses might also be deleted from NSU's curriculum if the bill were passed. If such curriculum changes were made, program enrollment could be increased. Faculty members would be available for more intense clinical practicum supervision of fewer hours, more academic advising, and clinical service if course work and clinical practicum were reduced.

3. University of South Dakota (USD)

House Bill 1215 would have a minimal, if any, impact on either the graduate or the preprofessional program at USD. Almost all preprofessional program graduates earn a master's degree prior to employment and obtain minimal clinical practicum at the undergraduate level. The preprofessional program is similar to those at many other institutions.

There is potential for increased speech-language pathology graduate enrollment at USD from two sources: (1) full-time traditional master's degree students, and (2) part-time baccalaureate-level students who lack master's level education for compliance with new entry level requirements. It is anticipated that, even though bachelor-level practitioners would be "grandfathered" under the provision of the current bill, a number of baccalaureate-level practitioners would seek the master's degree. With the master's degree, one can qualify for the ASHA CCC, which is nationally recognized and required for employment in many places.

V. Recommendations to Office of the Regents

1. Support the bill to move the entry level for practice of speech-language pathology to master's level. This bill has a liberal grandfathering provision which should not affect individuals who are currently practicing at the bachelor's level. The master's entry level is consistent with national trends and standards in a majority of the states. The provisions of this bill are consistent with those of all but one neighboring state.

2. The bill would also make the requirement for the practice of speech-language pathology similar to those of the sister profession of audiology. Audiologists in South Dakota have had a master's degree requirement since 1978.

3. Based on the responses of the students we visited, a master's degree requirement would have minimum, if any, effect on them or their decision to work as speech-language pathologists or in any way exacerbate the shortages in the rural areas. Surprisingly, all the students interviewed were in favor of the master's degree as the entry level.

4. The bill recognizes the national certification standard (CCC) and allows individuals who hold that credential to practice.

5. There is no compelling need for a second graduate program in the state at this time. There is no compelling need for a third undergraduate program unless it would be in the western part of the state where there are no programs.

6. We recommend closer links among the two preprofessional only programs (South Dakota State University and Northern State University) and the graduate program (University of South Dakota).

7. The retention of two undergraduate, preprofessional only programs seems appropriate. However, the program at SDSU will require increased funding.

8. The graduate program at the University of South Dakota is not at capacity, and additional students can be educated in the graduate programs in speech-language pathology and audiology. The program funding at USD should be continued at least at its current level. At this time, it would seem more prudent to provide additional funding to USD rather than start another master's program if the USD program would reach their graduate student maximum.

9. Every effort should be made to increase the ethnic diversity of student populations, especially Native Americans. Stipends should be made available for such an effort. All students we visited with appeared to be Caucasian. The program faculty, after a review of a draft of this report, noted that two Native American students are currently enrolled in the undergraduate program.

10. The shortage of speech-language pathologists in the rural areas is, and will likely continue to be, a chronic problem. Of the 30 or so students we talked with, only one or two expressed an interest in working in rural South Dakota or other rural areas in other states. Making a master's degree the minimum entry level for the practice of all speech-language pathologists is not likely to create additional shortages in rural South Dakota. There will likely be a need for some sort of incentive program to encourage people to take jobs in rural areas. The students we talked to were not particularly interested in employment in rural areas. However, several students stated that if student aid were tied to service in rural South Dakota or if some of the loans were forgiven in exchange for work in underserved areas of the state, they would be willing to consider employment in such areas.

11. Based on the data available from the South Dakota Department of Labor, job prospects for speech-language pathologists to be worse than average in the state for the next ten years are estimated to be worse than average. This estimate is in contrast to national projections which suggest that demand for speech-language pathologists is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2000. In short, if these statistics from the Labor Department are correct, shortages of speech-language pathologists are associated with geographic isolation rather than with the number of graduates. The number of master's graduates should exceed the number of openings projected in this report.

VI. Statement Concerning the Proposal to Require a Master's Degree as the Entry Level for Speech-Language Pathologists in the Schools

The master's degree has been the minimum accepted level of preparation for employment as a speech-language pathologist promoted by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and its 49 recognized state associations since 1965. The decision to establish the M.A. as the minimum level of preparation for employment as a speech-language pathologist was made following a national two-year Office of Education-funded study completed in 1961 of speech-language and hearing programs in public schools. The results of the study (which included responses from ASHA members and nonmembers) showed that 98% of 1,800 respondents indicated that graduate education was desirable, if not essential, in providing services in the schools. The majority of the respondents favored a five-year minimum education requirement.

In 1963, a national conference on the issue of graduate education in speech-language pathology and audiology was held. The 105 experts in the profession attending the conference overwhelmingly agreed that the minimum educational level for speech-language pathologists should be the M.A. degree or equivalent. Currently, the professionally accepted level of professional education for certification as a speech-language pathologist includes the following:

- A graduate degree with specific study in human communication. The course of study includes psychology, anatomy, physiology, sociology, neurology, acoustics, linguistics, psycholinguistics, speech reading, clinical psychology, and education and training in diagnosis, appraisal, and remediation of speech, language, and hearing disorders.
- Three hundred (300) clock hours of supervised clinical experience.
- Nine months of full-time professional experience under supervision of an individual who holds the Certificate of Clinical Competence.
- A passing score on a national examination in speech-language pathology.

The question typically asked in discussions related to personnel qualifications is: "Is a master's degree really better than a bachelor's?" In a review of 50 randomly selected transcripts and practicum records submitted to ASHA by students seeking the Certificate of Clinical Competence, the data clearly show that individuals who would have terminated their professional education at the B.A. level would not have been qualified to provide services.

In an ASHA study of the competencies of bachelor and master level speech-language pathologists, respondents were asked to rate their competency on 38 skills necessary to conduct a comprehensive speech-language pathology program. Over 76% of a randomly selected population of 2,554 B.A. and M.A. speech-language pathologists responded. On 34 of the 38 skills, individuals with B.A. degrees rated themselves lower than individuals with a M.A. degree. Bachelor's level persons rated themselves as having high competence in only five of 38 skills:

1. Treating persons with articulation disorders;
2. Evaluating persons with articulation disorders;
3. Selecting individuals for caseload;
4. Establishing treatment plans based on assessment data;
5. Using assessment data to terminate services.

State and federal laws require that local education agencies provide comprehensive special education services for all handicapped children. The role of the speech-language pathologist in carrying out state and federal special education mandates requires qualified personnel. It is curious that South Dakota recognizes the need for a master's degree to practice speech-language pathology in all settings except in schools where a bachelor's degree is still accepted. This dual set of standards does not meet the qualified provider provision

of P.L. 99-457, which requires that when two different standards for practices are used to certify (license), the higher standard must be utilized. To assume that a person with minimal training can provide adequate and appropriate services for communicatively handicapped children in the schools indicates a lack of perspective on the nature of communicative disorders and the services provided by the speech-language pathologist. The problems seen in the schools are many times as complicated as those in hospitals and clinics.

In the school setting, speech-language pathologists plan, direct, and participate in many habilitative and instructional programs for children and youth who are communicatively handicapped. They also seek to prevent language, speech, and hearing disorders through pupil and public education, early identification of problems, and active work with children, often involving parents, educators, and health professionals. They engage in research activities to increase understanding of the nature of communication problems and to develop improved methods for evaluation and treatment of children with communicative disorders.

Speech-language pathologists serve as administrators, supervisors, or coordinators of programs. They supervise staff and plan, develop, manage, and evaluate the total language, speech, and hearing programs. Speech-language pathologists implement public information programs to inform the community of children's communicative needs and the availability and range of special services offered as part of the total educational process.

Some school-based speech-language pathologists concern themselves chiefly with children's language and speech disorders, while others work more exclusively with children who have hearing disorders. Speech-language pathologists in the schools provide direct services for children and youth who have communicative disorders that include:

- Identifying children with communication problems by means of screening, survey, or referral programs;
- Assessing and diagnosing children's communicative needs and behaviors;
- Providing goal-based remediation in individual and/or group sessions; and
- Conducting periodic reassessment and evaluation of children's progress in achieving structured clinical goals and objectives.

Direct intervention services are given to children with:

- Language handicaps that often are the basis for academic learning disabilities;
- Chronic voice disorders;
- Disfluencies (stuttering);
- Hearing impairment;
- Moderate to severe articulation disorders; and
- Language, speech and hearing disorders associated with cleft palate, cerebral palsy, intellectual impairment, emotional or behavioral disturbances, visual impairment, autistic behavior, aphasia, and other conditions.

Direct services often are provided to:

- High-risk infants enrolled in school operated child development centers;
- Preschoolers in school-based head start programs;
- Elementary, middle, and secondary school children and youth;
- Multiple-handicapped students in regional, local district, or state schools; and
- Severely handicapped children in local district special schools, centers, classes, or home settings.

The role of the speech-language pathologist in the schools has changed considerably in the past two decades, especially since implementation of P.L. 94-142. The role is varied and includes working with children with a wide spectrum of disorders from mild to severe. Emphasis has been placed on the severely

handicapped. Providing the services necessary for the severely handicapped requires well qualified professionals.

One of the unfortunate assumptions held by individuals who are not familiar with the nature of communicative disorders and the services provided by speech-language pathologists is that individuals who are employed in rural school districts do not need to be as well educated as their colleagues in clinic and hospital programs. This is an erroneous assumption.

Speech-language pathologists providing services in rural schools need to be the best qualified professionals. As discussed previously, speech-language pathologists are required to provide services to a diverse population of handicapped children and youth of all severities and ages. They must be excellent diagnosticians to ensure appropriate placement of handicapped children. They typically do not have access to the support services made available to speech-language pathologists working in clinics and hospitals.

Frequently, they are the only speech-language pathologist in the district. They must be able to work on multidisciplinary teams and provide consultation to a variety of teachers and specialists. Because the speech-language pathologists serving the rural school district must "do it all," it is logical they should at least meet the minimum accepted professional level of education and training -- the master's degree in speech-language pathology. Providing mandated special education services is difficult enough for a well-trained person with a master's degree. For a person with minimal qualifications, it is clear that services provided would be less than appropriate. Local education agencies could spend considerable time and money on due process hearings and litigation trying to justify services provided by less than qualified individuals. Certainly, allowing individuals with less than an M.A. to be employed as a speech-language pathologist in South Dakota schools is an open invitation for the concerned parent to question through legal avenues why persons who do not meet the highest state standards for certification are allowed to provide services.

There is no assurance that allowing the continued employment of B.A. level persons will solve the personnel shortage. Currently, the ten states that allow individuals with B.A. degrees to be employed in the schools still report vacancy rates that exceed 10%.

At a point in time when the quality of education in the nation's schools is being questioned, it would seem inappropriate to implement a program that will allow less than qualified persons to work in South Dakota schools. At a time when the federal government is trying to give the states more responsibility in establishing policy in education and is assuring advocates that states can be trusted to maintain and provide quality programs, this proposal should result in higher quality programs. This is the kind of trust that will encourage advocates to support the elimination of federal involvement in education.

On behalf of the communicatively handicapped children, we urge the state to adopt a program that will allow qualified individuals to provide speech-language pathology services to children in schools.

It is recommended that regulations for employment as a speech-language pathologist in South Dakota public schools require a master's degree in speech-language pathology. Although the master's degree does not guarantee competence, it does indicate that the person has participated in a specified program of education, training and practicum that meets minimum accepted professional standards. Without such a requirement, there is no assurance that an individual employed has met minimum standards of professional education.

Requiring the master's degree for speech-language pathologists employed in South Dakota shows that the state is concerned about the quality of services provided to communicatively handicapped children. Prospective employees know what they must achieve. Individuals with B.A. degrees who want to work in the state would know that they must improve their skills to be able to provide the quality of service demanded in South Dakota schools.

VII. Board of Regents Recommendations

1. Recognize the need to move towards Masters level preparation for licensing and certification in speech-language pathology. This move will result in the continuation of the undergraduate programs at SDSU, NSU and USD. Programs at SDSU and NSU would become pre-professional only programs. No additional new graduate programs would be started.

2. Direct the campuses to follow the ASHA undergraduate advisement in the operation of undergraduate programs.

3. Direct USD to develop contingency plans to train more Masters level students in preparation for the implementation of Public Law 99-457 and/or changes in state law.

4. Direct the Regents Office, SDSU, NSU and USD to work with school districts, professional associations and the Office of Rural Health to increase the ethnic diversity of the student population and encourage graduates to seek employment in underserved rural areas of the state.

5. Encourage greater cooperation between programs.

This report was published by the South Dakota Board of Regents. Seventy-five copies were printed at an approximate cost of $0.76 each.